

IN THE BACKGROUND

Please amend the "Background of the Invention" as follows:

[0004] There are devices that rely on either an external electrical power source or a direct reaction between silver and another metal material to generate the production of silver ions. One technology, described in U.S. Patents Nos. 4,657,808 and 4,529,623 to Frederick Maggs consists of activated carbon with silver dispersed within it. Other technologies, described in U.S. Patents Nos. 5,681,575, 5,753,251, 5,770,255, and 5,837,275 to Dr. Robert Burrell, et al., use vapor deposition techniques to apply a coating of silver onto a medical device. Yet another technology, described in U.S. Patent No. 5,814,094 to Dr. Robert O. Becker, uses electricity (often from a coin battery) to produce free silver ions that may penetrate into the wound tissue. And yet another technology, described in U.S. Patent No. 6,522,918 to Dr. William E. Crisp, et al., combines silver and another metal-bearing material within a thickness of material, such as a sponge.

Unfortunately, these devices may require expensive manufacturing processes, and the devices themselves can be complex and cumbersome.